

goes on to explain that House Democrats would fast-track the reconciliation bill, fixing some, but not all, of the problems. Next, the Senate will then take up the House version and send it to the President.

Americans need to know that House Democrats must pass the Senate's health care takeover before the Senate can alter or try to improve it. The Senate bill is too bitter of a pill for my colleagues to swallow because it kills jobs. On the good side, The Hill today reports, front page, the Senate bill provides for citizenship verification to buy insurance.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

MANAGING THE BORDER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, you know, we, as Americans, have a responsibility to protect our environment and to protect our homeland, and unfortunately we are failing at both.

Our border patrol has done a wonderful job in the urban areas of this country; however, in rural areas, where the United States Federal Government owns about 40 percent of the land from California to Texas, we seem to not be doing quite as well, and that now becomes the prime area where evil groups like drug cartels and human traffickers and potential terrorists are now entering into this country.

The rules, the regulations, and our interpretations of the law are prohibiting our Border Patrol from actually fulfilling their functions. We have gaps, not only gaps in the fence, but gaps in our virtual fence, gaps in our monitoring that allow these groups to have open access—drug cartels, human trafficking cartels, potential terrorists—undetected and unfettered into this country.

Secretary Salazar is currently at the border. On Saturday, he will be at the Chris Eggle Visitors Center. Chris Eggle is a Border Patrol agent who was shot and killed in the line of duty at Oregon Pipe National Monument back in August of 2002. He was pursuing a drug cartel hit squad who had fled across these open areas into the United States after committing a string of murders in Mexico.

These people we are talking about who are illegally coming into this country are those who are bringing massive amounts of illegal drugs into this country, who are involved in human trafficking—illegally coming

into this country—who are involved in unthinkable acts of aggression, and especially violence against women.

We have wilderness law protection that is supposedly there to protect the sanctity of the land; unfortunately, in some of our laws or interpretation of those laws about wilderness area we are actually opening up this land to some of those evil people who are coming across. And in so doing, they are destroying the wilderness characteristics we are trying to protect. What it means is that we are destroying that which we wish to protect.

Therefore, I am asking Secretary Salazar for four items in his visit when he sees firsthand the problems we have on our southern border.

Number one, I am asking him to end the Department of the Interior's requirement that the Department of Homeland Security must negotiate access and seek permission before entering onto Interior lands to enforce the law and secure the border.

Two, I want him to acknowledge that Department of the Interior policies have contributed to severe environmental damage and destruction by hampering Homeland Security from fulfilling their job to stop organized crime, drug and human traffickers, and potential terrorists from crossing the border through protected natural areas.

Three, I want him to stop impeding Border Patrol access to public lands, including wilderness areas, for the purpose of siting and building electronic surveillance.

And, four, I want to end the Department of the Interior's practice of extorting mitigation funds from Homeland Security. Money appropriated for border security should only be spent on making our borders secure, not diverted to unrelated Interior spending projects.

To secure our borders, we must do so to stop the evils of drug traffic, human trafficking, and potential terrorism. Common sense tells us that should be our goal; common sense tells us we should agree to that particular goal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WOOLSEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

SOMBER ANNIVERSARY OF ALABAMA TRAGEDY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BRIGHT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BRIGHT. Mr. Speaker, 1 year ago yesterday, a terrible tragedy occurred in south Alabama. On March 10, 2009, a lone gunman went on a murderous rampage through Coffee and Geneva Counties, leaving 10 people dead and

several wounded in Kinston, Samson, and Geneva, Alabama. It was truly one of the worst acts of violence our part of the country has ever seen.

We can never fully understand what would drive someone to commit such a monstrous act, especially against his own family and a helpless child. Be it personal, economic, or mental problems that led to such cruelty, it is unimaginable that something like this could happen until it strikes your friends and neighbors.

Even though the tragedy was a devastating shock to our small and close-knit community, it also showed the resolve of those who help protect and defend our way of life. We all owe a debt of gratitude to the first responders—the Alabama State Troopers of the Dothan Troopers Post, officers of the Geneva Police Department, officers of the Geneva County Sheriff's Department, and an officer of the Alabama Conservation and Natural Resources Department who pursued and eventually found the gunman dead from a self-inflicted gunshot wound. Without their swift action and response, the loss of life could have been even worse. A year's time of reflection has only made their brave efforts more worthy of our respect and praise.

Another group that must be recognized are the soldiers of nearby Fort Rucker, Alabama. Since World War II, Fort Rucker has been an invaluable part of the Wiregrass area. They were quick to answer the call of local officials still reeling from the shock to serve their communities and keep the peace. We are proud of Fort Rucker's presence in the Second District of Alabama and are very appreciative of everything they do.

I would also like to thank my colleagues in the House, especially the 58 cosponsors of the resolution expressing sympathy to the victims of that terrible day, for showing their steadfast support. Though nothing could replace those who are lost, I know the folks in Geneva and Coffee Counties certainly appreciate that Congress was thinking of them during their time of mourning.

I encourage those watching across the country to remember the wounded as we pray for their continued recovery—State Trooper Mike Gillis, Greg McCullough, Ella Meyers, and Jeffrey Nelson—and to join me in praying for the departed victims and their families, Bruce Maloy, Lisa McClendon, Andrea Myers, Corrine Gracy Myers, Sonya Smith, James Starling, James White, Virginia White, Dean Wise and Tracy Wise. Even though those 10 souls are no longer with us, I know we will never forget them and will do all that we can to honor their memories.

As elected officials, we never want to come to the House floor for these purposes. In many ways, however, it is one of the most important duties we have as Members of Congress to honor and call the attention of the Nation to those in our districts who have experienced great loss and committed brave